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ABSTRACT

The motivations of black faculty with doctorates to teach in the relatively few predominantly black colleges and universities at a time when there is heavy demand for black faculty in most American higher education institutions are explored. Black faculty are in short supply, constituting 5% or fewer of the total American professoriate, and this shortage is expected to become more severe. A questionnaire was sent to 85 historically black colleges with full-time black faculty members holding a doctorate and 22 institutions responded. Respondents rated the importance of each of 18 items (such as salary offered, size of community and institution, geographic location, racial composition of faculty and student body, favorable housing, opportunity to contribute to black people, and sincerity in recruiting and offer of position) in terms of its influence on their decision to work in their institutions rather than predominantly white ones. Black faculty with doctorates report they are teaching in predominantly black institutions because of the perceived quality of the working conditions and a desire to contribute to black people; because their career preferences match the mission of their institutions; and because they believe the black institutions are sincere in recruiting them. They are also influenced by working conditions such as length of probationary period, tenure, salary, and program scope. The questionnaire is appended, and tables are included. Contains 14 references. (SM)

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BLACK FACULTY: THE REASONS THEY TEACH IN PREDOMINANTLY BLACK COLLEGES

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, November 3-6, 1988. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Black Faculty: The Reasons They Teach in Predominantly Black Colleges

Objective

The purpose of this present study was to explore the motivations of black faculty with doctorates to teach in the relatively few predominantly black colleges and universities at a time when there is heavy demand for black faculty in most American higher education institutions.

Perspective

Black faculty are in short supply, constituting 5 percent or fewer of the total American professoriate. The shortage is expected to become more severe as black enrollments for advanced degrees decline. In 1986, blacks earned 27 percent fewer research doctorates than they had earned ten years earlier (Hirschorn, 1988). Most predominantly white institutions recruit black faculty heavily, yet a greatly disproportionate number are concentrated in historically and predominantly black colleges and universities. Estimations of the concentration vary but no observer places it as much less than half of the black faculty. Sudarkasa (1987) says "most" of them are in the predominantly black colleges, Galombos (1979) found three-fourths of those in public southern institutions to be employed by predominantly black institutions, and the National Advisory Commission on Black Higher Education and Black Colleges and Universities (1980) reported 40

percent in the historically black colleges. Mommsen's (1974) study of black Ph. D.s found that 80 percent of them had gone to predominantly black institutions for their first full-time faculty positions after completion of the doctorate. There is no question that the primary pool from which the predominantly white institutions can recruit black faculty lies in their predominantly black counterparts.

One somewhat dated study of black faculty in predominantly white institutions outside the South showed that only 29 percent had moved from employment in a predominantly black institution (Rafky, 1972). Another found that only 12.8 percent of black faculty in white two-year institutions and 9.4 percent of those in white four-year institutions had moved to those positions from employment in predominantly black institutions (Moore and Wagstaff, 1974, p. 133). For whatever reasons, black faculty do not appear to be eager to leave predominantly black colleges and universities to teach elsewhere. Sowell reported that "the average salary increase required to induce black academics to move was over $6,000 a year in 1970" (Sowell, 1986, p. 78).

A number of reasons have been suggested as to why black faculty cluster in predominantly black institutions. Among them are the need for a sizable black community (Moore and Wagstaff, 1970), career characteristics which do not match up with research universities (Sowell, 1986) and (Sudarska, 1987), opportunity to serve the black community (Denier, 1985), need for contact with

black faculty and black students (Harvey and Scott-Jones, 1985) (Elmore and Blackburn, 1983), and intentionally ineffective recruiting at predominantly white institutions (Harvey and Scott-Jones, 1985).

Method

Survey procedures. We sent a letter to the chief academic officer at each of 85 historically black colleges and universities. It explained the study and asked that they distribute the questionnaire (appendix) to all full-time black faculty who held a doctorate or send a list of their names so a questionnaire could be mailed to each. The questionnaire explained the study, promised anonymity, and asked the respondents to rate, on a four-point scale, (no, little, moderate, or much influence), the importance of each of 18 items in terms of its influence on their decision to work in their institutions, rather than in a predominantly white institution. The items were selected from a review of pertinent literature and by judgment. Respondents also were asked to add any influencing factors or comments they wished.

Twenty-two institutions responded and 785 surveys were distributed in them. Returned questionnaires numbered 342 (44 percent). The institutions represented were in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Seven were public institutions and 15 were private. Their enrollment ranged from 132 to 6,504, with a mean of 2,085. One was a junior college and one a post-baccalaureate professional school. The other 20 offered bachelor's degrees and 11 of them offered graduate degrees as well. The distribution of respondents with regard to institutional type, institutional size, and community size is shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Factor analysis. The intercorrelation matrix of the 18 item responses to the questionnaire was factor analyzed, and extracted factors were rotated to a varimax solution. For the initial factoring, only the eigenvalues greater than the 1.0 criteria for retaining factors for subsequent rotation was applied. The resulting four factor solution was then examined and evaluated with the scree test (Guilford, 1977), and against Thurstone's criteria (1968) for a sound rotation. Item-to-factor loadings of .40 or greater were considered significant for interpretation. Following the initial analysis of the obtained factor solution, two items which failed to load cleanly on any obtained factor were eliminated, and the reduced set was refactored and extracted factors were rotated to a varimax solution. This second factor matrix met all of Thurstone's guidelines for a sound factor

solution. For both the initial analysis and the refactored solution, the FACTOR subprogram of SPSS, (SPSS-X, 1983) was used to complete the analyses of the data.

Results

Survey responses. The level of influence which the respondents attributed to each of the items is shown in Table 2. The items reported to be most influential were the teaching mission, the opportunity to contribute to black people, sincerity in recruiting and the race of students. Least influence was attributed to teaching load, a favorable probationary period, race of faculty, and community size.

Insert Table 2 about here

Factor analysis. Examination of the eigenvalues obtained from the initial factor analyses using all 18 questionnaire items, suggested a four factor solution which accounted for 42.7 percent of the total variance. Factor I (Working Conditions) was associated with a 24.8 percent of total variance. Factor II (Race) accounted for 8.5 percent of variance. Factor III (Location) accounted for only 6.2 percent of variance, while Factor IV (Quality of Life), accounted for 3.2 percent of variance.

Following the application of Thurstone's guidelines which suggested the deletion of items 11 (Relatively low teaching load)

and 17 (Mission of institution), which appeared unrelated to any of the obtained factors, the data were refactored and the four factor solution was rotated to a varimax criterion. The resulting factor matrix is displayed in Table 3. This four factor solution accounted for 45.2 percent of the total variance. Factor I (Working Conditions) was associated with 25.3 percent of total variance. Factor II (Race) accounted for 9.5 percent of variance. Factor III (Location) accounted for only 6.9 percent of variation while Factor IV (Quality of Life) accounted for 3.5 percent of variation.

Insert Table 3 about here

Examination of the factor loadings reveals that all of the remaining 16 items loaded clearly on four interpretable factors. Inspection of the loadings indicated that Factor I (Working Conditions) was defined by five items with two items loading at .86 and .82. These two items were "Favorable tenure prospects" and "Favorable promotion prospects." Factor II (Race) was identified by four items, the item with the highest loading (.84) was "Racial composition of student body." Factor III (Location) contained three items, the highest loading (.84) being the item "Size of community." Factor IV (Quality of Life) consisted of four items, the highest of which (.58) was the item "Favorable housing situation."

Discussion

Black faculty with doctorates report that they are teaching in predominantly black institutions because of the perceived quality of the working conditions and because they want to contribute to black people, particularly students; because their career preferences match the mission of their institutions, principally private with an undergraduate teaching emphasis; and because they believe the black institutions were sincere in recruiting them. They also are influenced, though not as heavily, by the location of their institutions with a sizable black community in which to live. Most of them are working in southern states. While we did not determine their home states, several did comment that they enjoy working in the institution from which they graduated.

Contrary to earlier findings, these faculty do not exhibit a strong need to be associated with other black faculty. They are primarily influenced by working conditions such as length of the probationary period, tenure and promotion prospects, salary and program scope. These are the issues on which the decisions turn.

The comments added by many respondents emphasize the importance of contributing to the development of black students. They also mention often the students' need for black role models among the faculty and the importance of maintaining the heritage of historically black colleges. Several respondents report a need or wish to live near family members; perhaps this explains, to

some extent, the influence which is attributed to geographic location in the questionnaire.

Institutions have no control over some of the incentives which attract black faculty, such as geographic location, proximity to family, and the presence of an historically black heritage. But most other factors of importance are subject to some control. If any institution, predominantly white or black, seeks to recruit and keep doctorally qualified black faculty who are in such short supp , it must try to provide them opportunities to work with black students in ways which satisfy their desire to contribute to the development of black people. It must have a faculty reward system and a curriculum which emphasize the importance and value of teaching, an environment in which teachers are first-class citizens. It also must have a faculty recruiting process which puts before prospective black faculty those faculty and administrators who will assure them that the interest in them as colleagues is genuine.

Further research into the variables which influence the choice of institutions by the nation's few black faculty may be simplified and enhanced by use of the four factors identified in this study, "Working Conditions," "Race," "Location," and "Quality of Life," with more attention devoted to the nuances and modes of influence. Particular attention should be given to "Working Conditions," the factor which appears to matter most to black faculty, as it may to white, in choosing where they will work.

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TABLE 1

Number and Percentage of Respondents by Public vs. Private Control, Highest Degree Offered, Enrollment, and Community Population

	Number	Percentage
Control		
Public	218	64
Private	124	36
Highest Degree Offered		
Associate or Bachelor's	72	21
Graduate	270	79
Enrollment		
< 1500	105	31
> 1500	237	69
Community Population		
< 50,000	156	46
50,000 - 500,000	79	23
> 500,000	107	31

TABLE 2

Frequency and Percentage of Responses Indicating the Level of Influence of Each Item

Item	Level of Influence: None Freq.	None %	Little Freq.	Little %	Moderate Freq.	Moderate %	Much Freq.	Much %
Geographic location	69	20	56	17	74	22	140	41
Community size	138	41	58	17	78	23	67	20
Institution size	116	34	69	20	105	31	50	15
Program Scope	84	25	72	21	106	31	76	23
Salary	83	25	89	26	104	31	62	18
Race of faculty	131	38	73	21	85	25	52	15
Race of students	84	25	34	10	73	22	149	44
Tenure prospects	113	33	57	17	85	25	83	25
Promotion prospects	86	25	72	21	91	27	90	27
Black professional community	74	22	64	19	127	37	76	22
Favorable housing	121	36	59	17	90	27	69	20
Teaching load	203	60	69	21	50	15	14	4
Schools for children	156	46	37	11	69	20	77	23
Cultural opportunities	105	31	60	18	112	33	63	19
Sincerity in recruiting	60	18	42	12	75	22	162	48
Contributions to blacks	7	2	4	1	47	14	280	83
Institutional mission[1].	35	11	27	8	104	32	157	49
Length of probation[2].	191	62	55	18	43	14	18	6

1. Seventy-nine percent characterized institutional mission as teaching rather than research.

2. Sixty-five percent characterized the probationary preiod as shorter than most.

TABLE 3

Rotated Varimax Factor Loadings for the Final Analysis with Two Items Deleted

Item	Factor Loadings I	II	III	IV	h2
FACTOR I					
Favorable tenure prospects	86				77
Favorable promotion prospects	82				73
Salary offered	54				35
Length of probationary period	42				21
Scope of programs	40				30
FACTOR II					
Racial composition of student body		84			73
Racial composition of faculty		56			38
Availability of sizable black professional community		50			48
Opportunity to contribute to black people		46			25
FACTOR III					
Size of community			84		75
Geographic location			60		38
Size of institution			43		35
FACTOR IV					
Favorable housing situation				58	46
Access cultural and entertainment opportunities				56	43
Favorable school situation for children				47	30
Sincerity in recruiting and offer of position				43	27

Note. Decimals omitted. The first, second, third, and fourth factors had eigenvalues of 4.04, 1.52, 1.11, and .56 respectively.

Introduction

This is a study to identify the factors which influence black faculty with doctorates to work in predominantly black colleges and universities rather than in institutions which are predominantly white.

We ask that you identify and rate the importance of factors which influenced you by marking this response sheet. It should require no more than ten minutes. Then add any additional factors which we have overlooked and any comments you wish to make about the study. Return the response sheet in the addressed, pre-paid envelope.

Your response will be kept anonymous in the report of this study. The number in the upper right corner of the page will be used to keep track of types of institutions and the states represented.

Thank you.

By marking below, indicate the extent to which each listed factor influenced you to work where you are. If a factor was of no influence whatever to you, just mark the "no influence" column.

	No Influence	A Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Much Influence
1. Geographic location (Region of the country)	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Size of community	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Size of institution	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Scope of programs (Undergraduate only, graduate, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Salary offered	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Racial composition of faculty	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Racial composition of student body	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Favorable tenure prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐

	No Influence	A Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Much Influence
9. Favorable promotion prospects	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Availability of sizable black professional community	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Favorable housing situation	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Relatively low teaching load	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Favorable school situation for children	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Access to variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Sincerity in recruiting and offer of position	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Opportunity to contribute to black people	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Mission of the institution	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Length of probationary period	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Mission of the institution	
Principally teaching	Research Opportunities
☐	☐

18. Length of probationary period	
Shorter than most	Longer than most
☐	☐

19. Additional factors influencing you

20. Comments on this study